

SOME REASONS PEOPLE USE A VISUAL SCHEDULE

Taken from - <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/visual-schedule/>

1 || Visual schedules allow kids to understand the plan.

Everyone likes to know the plan, to be in control, and to check things off their list. Children are no different. A visual schedule is like a kid-friendly version of the calendars and to-do lists we use as adults, only using pictures.

2 || Visual schedules break steps down into pictures.

Schedules can reflect a mini-routine such as getting ready for bed or they can represent the full schedule of activities for the day. Either way children can see a clear beginning, middle and end. The child understands each step and doesn't have to do any guessing to interpret instructions.

Helpful Hint: Children respond well to pictures of real faces, especially themselves or other children, rather than cartoons. Simplicity is best. Only have the activity that is expected in the picture. Make your own or many sources exist including free downloads or kits for purchase.

3 || Visual schedules help children engage, focus, and attend.

Children learn best with hands-on activities that get them moving. Children can touch, carry and arrange the activity cards. Cards are put on to create the schedule and removed as each task is completed. Mounted cards can also be covered with a "post it note check mark" or marked as done next to the image. The schedule is a working to-do list for the child or class. Feel free to be creative and do what works best for your family. Interaction is more important than the type of interaction. Children are physically involved in tracking their own progress and have their own reminders if they forget.

4 || Pictures remind kids if they forget.

Verbal instructions are gone in a moment. If a child did not hear or understand the verbal instructions, they will likely continue what they were doing rather than following the direction. Picture schedules give a lasting reminder of the current task and plan. This allows time to process. If they forget or get distracted, kids can still be successful without repeating adult reminders.

5 || Pictures help kids transition more easily.

Think about how you feel when your boss drops in and has you stop what you're doing to go to a meeting you didn't have on your calendar. This is how kids feel when we ask them to change what they are doing. The result of unexpected transitions is often challenging behavior. If a task is not preferred, a visual schedule also shows what will follow the less favorable action or explicit "first" ... "then" imagery can be used.

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6 || Visual schedules frame autonomy and make expectations clear.

In the midst of a tough transition, a visual schedule can take the heat so the adult doesn't have to.

*"I know you don't want to brush your teeth, but **the schedule says** it's time to brush teeth. And look, when you are done with that, **then** it's your favorite... story time!"*

Kids can try to negotiate and avoid the task when being verbally instructed. A visual schedule is already set up to show the plan and expectation. Ideally the child is involved in setting the schedule. Visual schedules can be used to help kids feel more empowered. Like a choice chart, kids have some autonomy and can arrange the cards in a preferred sequence. Care givers still determine which tasks will be performed.

7 || Visual schedules help reduce power struggles.

When children know, are involved with the plan, can predict what is going to happen, and know why, they are much more likely to cooperate. Challenging behaviors may decrease when children understand the routine.

Routines are a critical component of an environment that decreases the likelihood of challenging behaviors. Visual schedules combine a predictable routine with clear expectations to allow for more success, celebration, and connection.

Review sessions should be a part of visual scheduling. A Caregiver may want to notice that certain times seem more challenging and the child can be involved in adjusting a schedule and asking for help they think might make those times more manageable for them. Review sessions can also be used to consider areas of improvement and increased mastery.

8 || Visual schedules can support *all* kids.

Whether you have a child with special needs or a child who is struggling with transitions, visual schedules can help *all* children follow the routine when they need extra support. These schedules can be used with an entire family without singling out a specific child.

Visual schedules can help support children who are:

- Unsure of what to do
- Struggling with transitions
- Anxious about upcoming activity
- Off-task or easily distracted
- Refusing to stop an activity
- Refusing to participate
- Having difficulty separating from a parent or caregiver

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- Struggling to wait
- Needing to be in control

9 || Visual schedules help kids build confidence and pride.

Visual schedules empower kids to manage their own routines. The top activity clearly reflects what they should be doing and the remaining tasks are visible so they know exactly what is left to do. Because they can complete the steps with little adult intervention, children feel independent and in control. This can increase confidence and interest in doing it again and again!

10 || Visual schedules help adults feel empowered and have more energy!

The combination of children knowing what is expected of them, adults repeating themselves less, and everyone celebrating successes together allows energy to go toward creating a positive environment. Cooperation between kids and caregivers allows extra energy to go toward fun family engagement rather than power struggles.